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SUBJECT: UN SAYS EUFOR-MINURCAT TRANSITION ON TRACK

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Assistant Secretary-General Mulet told the Security Council on March 17 that the EUFOR-MINURCAT transfer of authority (TOR) had proceeded smoothly, with many EUFOR troops rehatting or otherwise remaining in place as MINURCAT built its strength. He warned that some MINURCAT needs had yet to be filled by troop pledges, including a signals unit and several helicopters. He was also concerned that the trust fund dedicated to training Chadian security forces (DIS) would soon be exhausted. France said the TOR had been literally exemplary and that MINURCAT was taking over from an EUFOR that had been an operational success. China said EUFOR's success had stemmed from its willingness to cooperate with the governments of Chad and CAR. Ambassador DiCarlo expressed support for MINURCAT, warned that refugee flows from Darfur could increase in the aftermath of Sudan's expulsion of NGOs, and reiterated that troops were still badly needed in CAR to combat banditry. The Council issued a press statement, drafted by France, commending the TOR and the deployment of DIS forces, calling for improvement in Chad-Sudan relations, particularly by recourse to the Dakar Agreement process. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mulet told the Security Council in closed consultations on March 17 that the March 15 transfer of authority in Chad and Central African Republic (CAR) from EUFOR to MINURCAT had proceeded smoothly in large part because 1,877 EUFOR troops had rehatted with MINURCAT, many other EUFOR troops would remain until April 15, and additional troops had deployed from Ghana and Togo. Mulet said MINURCAT has 2,285 troops on the ground at present, would build to 3,900 troops by the June start of the rainy season, and would reach its 5,200 full strength, including 300 troops to be deployed to CAR, by the end of calendar year ¶2009.

¶3. (SBU) Mulet said the non-military side of MINURCAT, long deployed in the region, had been successful in training 850 Detachement Integre de Securite (DIS) police for deployment in and around IDP and refugee camps, but he warned that the donor trust fund that paid for that training was very close to exhaustion. He also sounded alarms about MINURCAT's ongoing need for a signals unit for deployment near Abeche and twelve of eighteen planned helicopters. He said MINURCAT had developed good relations with the Government of Chad, although transfer of infrastructure negotiations had been difficult and a status of mission agreement (SOMA) had yet to be finalized.

¶4. (SBU) French Permrep Ripert welcomed the TOR but called for praise for EUFOR as well for its success in protecting women and children in the camps and for fulfilling its promise to remain on the ground for one year. He offered EUFOR's performance as an example of what the EU can achieve that contrasted dramatically with situations elsewhere. He said EUFOR was a model of operational success as well as transition, referring to EUFOR patrols as "deterrents" to violence that allowed the training of MINURCAT and DIS forces. Austrian PermRep Mayr-Harting noted that EUFOR had been the largest EU effort in Africa to date and said Austria had supported it for three reasons: the UN had mandated it; it had a humanitarian focus; and its function as a bridge to a UN presence had been understood from the outset.

¶5. (SBU) Burkina Faso PolCoord was concerned about a possible security vacuum as MINURCAT got up to speed but agreed the TOR was a fine example of UN cooperation with a regional organization. China DPR said EUFOR's success was the direct result of its willingness to engage the host governments.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo praised the successful TOR and ongoing MINURCAT deployment and reminded Council members that MINURCAT deployment to northeastern CAR was still urgently needed to combat banditry and lawlessness. She asked Mulet whether Sudan's "reckless decision" to expel NGOs had created an increased flow of refugees into Chad or CAR. Mulet replied that the UN had not yet noted an increase in movement, although he added that stockpiles of humanitarian supplies in Darfur were rapidly dwindling and the situation demanded close monitoring.

¶7. (SBU) France drafted a press statement that the Council issued immediately after the session. The statement welcomed the TOR, commended the European Union on the successful completion of EUFOR deployment, took note of the DIS deployment as a critical element of the multidimensional presence, called for improved regional relations -- especially between Chad and Sudan -- in accord with the Dakar Agreement process, called on armed groups to renounce violence in accord with the Sirte and Libreville agreements, and called for Chad and CAR stakeholders to pursue national dialogue.

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